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In today's rapidly changing and highly competitive business environments, job seekers are often lost at sea when it comes to knowing how to best navigate the dark waters of career transition and keep your resume from sinking to the bottom of someone's stake. That's if you are lucky enough to have it first float to the top through the shark infested black holes of the Internet and the vast stingrays of applicant tracking systems.

Did you know?

The average time spent by a hiring manager or recruiter is less than 7 seconds? This means you must "capture them at hello", "first sight" intrigue them enough that they can't help but want to know more about you and read on.

Did you know?

When writing your resume for a specific job application online takes discipline, focus and expertise to not only capture "keywords" but which keywords? It takes knowing "how" to write in a way that visually catches the "eye" of the applicant tracking system (ATS) and then the human reading your resume for the first time—two different sets of eyes and both need to be done in just the right way to float your resume to the top.

Did you know?

Writing your resume today is both a science and an art? No longer are the days of just throwing together a chronological list of where you worked and what you did. Today, it is oh so much different and can be hard to know just what to do without help from an expert. Everyone out there seems to have an opinion on what they believe is the best way to write your resume.

So, what do you do to have the greatest chance of making it above sea level? First, be the captain of your ship. In other words, embrace this time in your life with discipline, focus and a genuine desire to find what works best for you. You will need patience, commitment, and perseverance at times. However, the good news is once you learn how to do it right, each time it will become easier and faster for you to apply to "best-fit jobs" and your own eyes will quickly pick up the keywords in a job description that you also possess in your treasure chest of skills, competencies, and experiences.

Okay, so how do I write my resume effectively so that I not only get recognized but I intrigue them enough to get an interview?

Great questions!

I wanted to make sure that what I share with you is not only my advice that has been honed for over a decade of critiquing and rewriting thousands of resumes but it also takes into consideration what the guru's of resume writing believe are "best practice" today.

The following are the most common themes all experts are saying.

"The most important action a job seeker needs to take RE: their resume is to not only list their keywords on their resume, but to repeat them. This is called "search engine optimization" in the business world and it's how companies get their websites to appear at the top of a Google search. It's the same way resumes appear at the top of a list in Applicant Tracking Systems." **Abby Kohut**

"Two things that jump to mind for ATS: -current keywords directly related to the target function, minimizing or eliminating language around work style or interpersonal skills. While these will be important to a candidate's final selection, on a resume "team-player" or "detail-oriented" are not as impactful and take up valuable resume real estate space. Regarding format: A clean format that is easy to read will get through an ATS. No tables, pictures, or pdfs. For real people reading resumes, in addition to the above comments, a resume should have a clear focus on supportive experiences and accomplishments. The ultimately distinguished preference is having an internal contact walk your resume to the reader. Employee referrals have such a high retention rate (last I read was 90%) many resume readers welcome a referral to help with the first stages of the selection process. (I know I do!)" **Alyson Frederico**

"A couple of my thoughts on resumes: 1) Brand yourself on your resume. Tell people "what you do" in your headline under your contact info, and then share some of those points in your summary. Very important to "customize" the Summary section of your resume, to show the fit to the job being sought. 2) Include relevant Key Words in your resume. Review the skills and experience being sought, and then make sure you use the right words to show you are a "match" for what they are seeking. Don't make the reader guess, and don't mislead your expertise either. 3) After developing a solid resume, brand yourself on LinkedIn. Be consistent, so that you present the best of "you" on LinkedIn that is consistently shared in

your resume. The Summary section on LinkedIn provides a larger platform to share more information and some stories and accomplishments that will make you more memorable too!"

Gayle Bridgeman

"Avoid Common Resume Buzzwords—While you review your resume for keywords, keep an eye out for overused buzzwords as well. Many job candidates include vague, generic terms that companies have learned to ignore—and programmed their ATSs to ignore. Given the context engines used by ATS, there are certain words that should be avoided: "can work independently," "detail-oriented," "dynamic," "problem-solver," and a number of variations on "success"—including "succeeded," "successful," and "successfully."

It's best to be straightforward. Using job-specific, skill-specific keywords and avoiding filler terms is the best way to make sure that your entry reflects your fit with the available position.

Candidates can certainly get lost in the resume abyss of the applicant tracking system. Resumes that get too creative with their wording can easily confuse ATS software to the point where it rejects the applicant." **Dirk Spencer, Corporate Recruiter**

"In my humble opinion, jobseekers need to use the language of the job posting when placing the experiences they have (that are a match to what the company is looking for). Jobseekers absolutely need to address the needs shown in the job posting, rather than just applying with a resume that shows wonderful experiences but not related to the job posting needs. I see many resumes when I post positions but very few (I hate to say) have been customized to show me the relevant experience I am looking for.

Foster Williams

Feel free to reach out to anyone of the experts mentioned in this blog and join their LinkedIn!